

Criteria for project on Medieval Times	Details/Specifics
Pose and answer a research question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- have a research question and answer it</li><li>- use accurate facts and information</li><li>- select key facts</li><li>- use a variety of sources</li></ul>
Summarize information showing personal learning and understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- work is detailed, informative, and factual</li><li>- organized clearly</li><li>- based on real events of the Middle Ages</li><li>- use historically correct vocabulary and concepts</li><li>- cite sources for your information</li></ul>
Communicate what you have learned through a choice of representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- shows effort, time taken to do it</li><li>- make clear and easy to read</li><li>- make neat</li><li>- make it interesting</li><li>- reflect Medieval times with realistic model or game</li><li>- shows creativity</li><li>- has original ideas</li><li>- the representation format that you selected is appropriate to the subject matter and the sharing format</li></ul>

Teacher input

Figure 9: b) T-chart

Setting criteria with students is only the beginning. To keep students focused on their learning, it is essential to link assessment practices to the established criteria.

## 2. Assessing Student Work in Relation to Criteria

### What is assessment?

Assessment can be defined as the process of collecting data on student performance. This process includes observing students, talking and listening to students, and looking at students' work—such as projects, tests, and assignments.

We want to emphasize the distinction between assessment and evaluation. Assessment involves appraising a student's work and collecting selected work samples that clearly reflect that student's learning. Evaluation involves judging and interpreting the information from this data and, if required, assigning letter grades.

We have found that by placing more emphasis and spending more time on assessing students in a variety of ways, we increase the depth and accuracy of our evaluations. We remind ourselves that assessment (collecting data) is ongoing from the day that students enter our classroom, and that end-of-term evaluation for report cards (making judgments on that data) takes place three or four times a year.

As soon as we started assessing students in a variety of ways (and on an ongoing basis) we had

to change the way we kept our mark books. They no longer contain only marks. To capture the richness, variety, and depth of the assessments, our mark books now include criteria-based assessments, such as scaled scores, notes and observations, self-assessments, as well as test scores and marks for assignments. The letter grades we assign need to reflect this increased depth of information about the student's learning. See further discussion in chapter 3, pages 51–55.

### **Shifting to criteria-based assessment**

Once criteria have been set with students, teachers need to determine how student performance will be assessed in relation to that criteria. In this section, we offer ten ways to assess student work that don't involve giving marks, scores, percentages, or numbers. This helps students focus on the criteria that count.

Our move away from marking papers or projects is deliberate. When we started using criteria, we expected our students to focus on them. But when they got their papers back, they would look only at their score—not at the criteria and the learning these represented.

As teachers, we had shifted from comparing student work to looking at it in relation to the criteria. Our students had not.

To help our students make this shift, we developed ten ways to assess student work “without

putting a mark on the paper.” We then used these assessment approaches on projects for which we and our students had set criteria. We found that when we assessed student work by not using the numbers and symbols associated with ranking and sorting, students began to focus on what really counts: what they are learning and what they can do to improve.

This does not mean that we never give numbers or marks to our students. They receive marks on tests, quizzes, right-and-wrong questions, and assignments for which we've not set criteria. All assessments, both qualitative and quantitative, are recorded. These provide the basis on which we evaluate student performance. We remind ourselves that we do not need to give a letter grade every time we assess student work; every day is not report-card day. As teachers, we *do* need to make judgments about student performance in relation to criteria for reporting. We do this about three or four times a year—once we have assembled a representative assessment base.

Setting criteria with students and assessing their performance in relation to the criteria (and without marks) are ways to help students move beyond their focus on the grade or number (“What did I get?” “What's it worth?” “What do I need to do for an ‘A’?”) and to concentrate on their learning (“This is what I'm doing well.” “I need to improve in these areas.” “The next thing I need to work on is...”). In this way, we use criteria to support the learning of all students.



Ten ways to assess without putting a mark on paper

We developed the following approaches with our students, and we encourage you to adapt them, not adopt them. Try those approaches that appeal to you, and discover those that work best with a particular project or assignment, with a particular group of students, or at a particular time of year.

We use a variety of assessment sheets, based on the sample at right, when assessing student work. These provide students with specific feedback about their work, and over time, give them a profile of their progress. Before we share our assessments with our students, we record the results in our mark book. This gives us a wide range of assessment data on which to base our later evaluations.

Figure 10: Sample assessment sheet

Headings here vary according to the assessment approach.

Title of assignment or project

Criteria for

The criteria, or what counts in the project or assignment


Teacher or student may request a conference when they need more information.

Conference requested ☐

Date(s) received:

Assessed by ☐ teacher  
☐ self  
☐ partner  
☐ other

Date work was received

Question(s):

Assignment:

Student:

Assessment may be made by teacher, student, partner or someone such as a parent or principal.

The teacher or student can record pertinent questions.

Criteria	Met	Not yet met
for reader response journal		
- recorded a minimum of 3 responses this week		✓
- included personal connections questions and predications	✓	
- used the format we set up in class (e.g. headings, page numbers)		✓

Conference requested ☐

Date(s) received: Nov. 20

Assessed by ☒ teacher  
☐ self  
☐ partner  
☐ other

Question(s):

Assignment: Reader Response

Student: Andrew J., Block 3

Figure 11: Met, Not Yet Met

MET, NOT YET MET

With this approach, the focus is on having students complete their work. This first step in using criteria separates what students are expected to complete from how well they complete it.

1. Set the criteria for a project. Teachers may set the criteria or refer to the four-step process (pages 7–14) for ways to involve students in doing this.
2. Make an assessment sheet such as the one illustrated at left for each student (or copy the blackline master in the Appendix, page 63).
3. Assess student performance in relation to the criteria by putting a check mark (✓) in the “Met” or “Not yet met” column for each criteria statement.
4. Highlight those criteria that have not been met.
5. After giving assessment sheets to students, invite those who received ‘NY’ to complete their work and resubmit it for reassessment.
6. Record student performance in your mark book as ‘M’ or ‘NY’. If students resubmit their work, record ‘R’ for “Revised,” adding an ‘M’ if they then meet the criteria.

MET, NOT YET MET, I NOTICED

With this approach we move beyond completing work and focus on aspects of quality and/or progress in the work.

- 1. Set the criteria for a project. Teachers may set the criteria or refer to the four-step process for ways to involve students in doing this.
- 2. Make an assessment sheet, such as the one illustrated opposite, for each student (or copy the blackline master in the Appendix, page 64).
- 3. Assess student performance in relation to the criteria by checking (✓) "Not yet met" and highlighting the material that needs attention, or checking (✓) "Met" and writing brief comments in the "I noticed ..." column. These comments should focus on the quality of the work done and/or progress made since the last assignment.
- 4. Before giving assessment sheets to students, record student performance in your mark book as 'NY' or 'M'. An asterisk can be used beside the 'M' to indicate quality or specific progress.
- 5. If students resubmit their work, record 'R' for "Revised," adding an 'M' for "Met" if they then meet the criteria.

Figure 12: Met, Not Yet Met, I Noticed

Criteria	Met	Not yet met	I noticed ...
for reader response journal			
- recorded a minimum of 3 responses this week	✓		you did 5 this week
- included personal connections questions and predictions	✓		you clearly express your feelings about the characters
- used the format we set up in class (re: headings, page numbers)		✓	

Conference requested ☐

Date(s) received: Sept. 29

Assessed by ☒ teacher  
☐ self  
☐ partner  
☐ other

Question(s):

Assignment: Reader Response

Student: Sam T., Block A